



New Castle Crier

The official newsletter of New Castle City

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New Castle, Delaware

November 2007

City Council adopts two new ordinances

At their last meeting on October 9, City Council members voted to adopt two new ordinances aimed at improving the quality of life for New Castle.

As reported in the last *New Castle Crier*, one ordinance will govern vacant buildings, requiring owners of this kind of property to register with the City and pay registration fees. The goal is to encourage these owners to have vacant buildings be occupied with proper purposes (either residential or commercial), or in cases where this is not feasible, to have buildings demolished.

The second ordinance adopted at the last meeting governs a variety

of issues related to graffiti. The City Council is concerned, as are many New Castle residents, about the rash of graffiti that has recently occurred in and around the City.

The New Castle Police have been working on several cases and have made arrests. Further, the Police have arranged for the offenders to fix up properties which have been defaced by graffiti. This has been accomplished under current State law. The City Council, however, has strengthened the City's position in opposition to graffiti by enacting a local law.

The local law provides that retailers who sell "graffiti implements" are prohibited to make

these sales to persons who are minors – under 18 years old. It is also unlawful for persons over 18 to provide these implements to minors, if that person is not a parent, guardian, teacher or instructor to the minor. It is also unlawful for minors to possess these implements.

Another part of the new law requires property owners who are victims of graffiti to eliminate the graffiti within 10 days of the property being defaced. These owners, however, may apply to the City for reimbursement of expenses relating to graffiti removal, if the City has funds available generated by fines paid by persons who have committed offenses as defined in the graffiti ordinance.

Anyone with questions about either of the new ordinances may contact City Administrator Cathie Thomas at 322-9812.

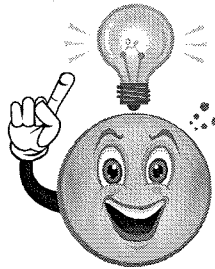
Bulb give-away is a bright idea from the Municipal Services Commission

The Municipal Services Commission (MSC) of New Castle will be distributing Compact Florescent Light bulbs (CFL) to residential customers as part of a program to encourage energy conservation. CFL bulbs do not produce heat and can produce several times as much illumination for the same amount of power while saving money and energy.

Within the next few weeks, each home will receive two complimentary CFL bulbs, hand-delivered to the front door of each customer.

The MSC encourages everyone to "Make a Difference" and help conserve energy.

Additional bulbs will be sold from our offices at 216 Chestnut Street to our customers at our cost.



The next
regular
City Council
meeting is 7 p.m.,
Tues., Nov. 13 at
Town Hall

New Castle – The First Capital City!

Important to display Building Permit placards

The City of New Castle routinely receives inquiries about whether or not Building Permits have been issued for work on properties within the City. The inquiries are often made by residents who notice work being done, however no placard is in sight on the property to indicate a Building Permit has been obtained.

The City responds to the inquiries, and in some cases a proper

permit has been applied for and obtained, yet without the placard in place there is no way for passers-by to have confirmation of this without contacting the City. Therefore, the City is asking that all property owners and contractors who have obtained Building Permits take special care to ensure placards are in plain view on properties where work is performed.

This reminder also goes out to homeowners and contractors that Building Permits are required for a variety of types of work performed on properties. Whenever the City identifies where work is being done without a permit when one is required, our Code calls for charging double the permit fee.

The City Code further requires that all contractors working within the City obtain a business license. The licenses are available in the Public Services Department at 900 Wilmington Road. This department is also happy to answer any inquiries, at 322-9813.

Contact Public Services Director with any concerns

Public Services Director Matthew Christopher encourages citizens or visitors with any questions or comments to contact him at 322-9813. Providing customer satisfaction is a key goal of City government, and we rely on information from the general public to aid us in addressing issues and solving problems. Please, do not hesitate to call us!

Public Hearing set

At 6:45 p.m. on Tues., Nov. 13, the City Council will hold a hearing to consider raising the income limits for those eligible to receive tax exemptions. The City currently offers exemptions to two segments of the population – those over 65 and those persons with disabilities.

In both cases, to be eligible for the exemptions, there are limits for annual income which must also be met. Currently, the maximum annual income is \$12,500 for a single person and \$25,000 for a couple. Consideration is being given to raise the limit to \$15,000 for a single person and \$30,000 for a couple. Further, the exemption is only applicable to the first \$32,000 of assessed value for a property.

If the change is approved, this may make more taxpayers eligible for the exemption, and also can account for inflation relative to incomes of persons currently receiving the exemption.

Code Enforcement Corner

The City of New Castle Board of Health strives to keep properties in conformance with adopted rules and codes.

To report any problems or file a complaint, please call Code Enforcement Officer John Lloyd at 302-323-6081. Complaint forms are also available on the City Web site at www.NewCastleCity.org.

This month's Code highlights and general reminders...

- Clean up after animals;
- All properties require routine, regular maintenance;
- Remove vehicles from property which are:
 - unregistered, inoperable, dismantled,
 - wrecked, missing major components.

For more information, review the following City Code Chapters: 140, 141, 172, 204 and 226.

The City Code can be found online at: www.NewCastleCity.org.

Please Note!
**City Offices will be
CLOSED and No Trash
Pickup will occur for the
Thanksgiving Holiday on
Thurs. & Fri., Nov. 22-23**

